

GESTINGTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 21st. January 2026 at 7pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllrs P. Bagby (Chair), K. Brazier (Vice-Chair), A. Cooper, G. Carey, D. Green, M. Green, T. Flower, BDC Cllr D. Holland and Kevin B. Money (Parish Clerk). There was 1 member of the public present.

001/2026 Apologies for Absence were received from ECC Cllr P. Schwier

002/2026 Declaration of Interest

To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary, Pecuniary or non-Pecuniary Interest relating to items on the agenda
None Declared

003/2026 To approve the Minutes of the last meeting of Gestingthorpe Parish Council

To receive and agree the minutes of the GPC meeting held on 19th. November 2025 **All Agreed**

004/2026 Essex County Councillor report – ECC Cllr Peter Schwier

005/2026 District Councillor report – BDC Cllr David Holland

The Government consultation on local government reorganisation in Essex has now closed and we are expected an announcement to be made in mid February.

BDC is in the process of setting the budget for 2026/27 and the 4 year medium term strategy. The budget proposals will come to full council on 16th February. I will report on the main changes at the next meeting. The draft local plan with proposed allocations for housing and employment and updated planning policies will go to the meeting of the full council on 2nd February. There will then be a public consultation on the proposals (known as regulation 18 consultation).

The Government is proposing to bring forward changes to the planning system which will require local planning authorities to inform the Government if they intend to refuse planning permission for developments of 150 or more homes. BDC has written to the Secretary of State expressing concerns at this change which will place pressure on LPAs to grant permission for sites which have not been allocated.

BDC has renewed its contract with Suffolk County Council for handling dry recyclates. The contract is for 13 years with a 6 year break clause and takes into account the upcoming changes to recycling.

The street scene department received 195 requests for help in September (the latest figures I have received). Of these, 106 related to fly tipping and 28 for abandoned vehicles.

BDC is continuing its efforts to support business through the North Essex Economic Board (NEEB) and held a number of events at the end of 2025 including a jobs and skills fair aimed at mid life employment, a session on start-ups and budgeting and a session on overcoming hurdles. These are very well received.

ECC - Letter sent to Minister of Local Government regarding Essex County Council will not be calling for the postponement of elections

New incinerated at Rivenhall to recycle more rubbish.

BDC Council tax and budget is looking to hold Council tax as per last year.

Does food waste be included in garden waste? Food waste goes to a digester and goes to compost so cannot be mixed.

A full discussion took place about Oates Cottages and the allocation process under the section 106. Cllr D. Holland to advise the Parish Council on how these houses are allocated and the due process to follow guidelines.

National Grid will have £4.2m to allocate to communities impacted by the Bramford to Twinstead reinforcement scheme. He urged councillors to consider projects that may be eligible. Cllr D. Holland left the meeting

006/2026 Public Participation Session

Mr Sharp spoke about lifting the branches of trees on the recreation ground. The section along the Eastern boundary is mostly done and work will continue around the recreation ground. Mr Sharp thought it a good idea to inform Ashley Cottage about the work being undertaken. 4 - 6 days of more work involved.

The fencing, which was installed by the Cricket Club is now collapsed and should be removed. This will be done with the help of Cllr. A Cooper and others. Past discussion related to the lack of trees along the Sudbury Road side of the field. To resolve, 5 broadleaf lime trees have been purchased and will be planted along the boundary at appropriate spacing. These will be watered during the first year after planting.

New fencing proposed to replace the existing wooden paling fencing on the corner by the bus stop. A design plan to be worked on with Richard Nice and presented to councillors.

007/2026 Planning Applications**25/02214/FUL** - Rectory Farm Audley End Gestingthorpe Essex CO9 3AU

Erection of replacement barn

Gestingthorpe Parish Council sent this planning response prior to the meeting

Thank you for advising of the alterations to the planning application for the above. We have had a couple of discussions with the applicant and we are pleased to see that he has responded positively to our comments. We are pleased to see the change to the cladding and roofing to black timber boarding and red pan tiles and also the addition of further tree planting and hedging. We were disappointed the building could not be set further back but understand the reasons why this was not possible. We therefore have no objections to the updated drawings added to the Braintree planning website on the 17th. December.

008/2026 Website update - Cllr P. Bagby

Councillors to receive design proposals and costings for updating GPC website

A resident has offered to review and update the existing website as well as maintain the website going forward if required. The update is expected to cost around £150. No designs were supplied by Cllr. P Bagby but the Little Maplestead website was referenced as a good example of how information can be grouped to improve the presentation of information. Costs for the ongoing maintenance is unknown at this time. Cllr. M Green asked what is the number of hits on the website.

009/2026 Representative reports

- **Highways** – Cllr M. Green

TRAFFWEB shows no collisions in the parish since the last meeting, the last one being the North End Road fatal collision involving a motorcyclist in March 2025, although it is worth noting that TRAFFWEB data is only shown up to 30-11-25 and would appear to be 10 months out of date.

Future dates for village litter picks are to be discussed in the January Parish Council meeting.

The sharp bend sign on Sudbury Road near to JW Pot Kiln Chase has been broken and on the ground for some time and remains so.

A number of potholes on our roads have been marked with paint and are therefore presumably scheduled for repair in the future

- **Playing Field** – Cllr A. Cooper

Micheal Sharp has very kindly begun trimming back the trees along the eastern side of the Playing Field, together with some other work near the Sudbury Road. He is using a skilled tree surgeon and the results looks superb.

Clearing up the branches will be done using mechanical apparatus, for which the Playing Field will need to be quite dry— to prevent rutting up the surface. I will arrange for this to be done, as soon as ground conditions permit— although we may have to wait for some weeks until it dries out sufficiently.

My thanks to Michael for the outstanding improvement he is making

- **Play Equipment** – Cllr D. Green

Nothing much to report on the playing field equipment or the pavilion.

The play field equipment repairs are still outstanding and I still have no info about the rubber matting to make enquiries regarding getting it re-laid.

- **Footpath** – Cllr T. Flower

No update on footpaths. Can Cllr T. Flower name and contact details be amended?

An A5 leaflet could be produced to show footpath walks in the village

- **Trees** – Cllr T. Flower No update but to thank Michael Sharp for all his hard work

- **Village Hall** – Cllr D. Green

Children's and adults parties were a great success. Coffee mornings are returning on the 30th January

Rachel pattern is running the London Marathon hon for a fund raiser for the village hall in April.

There will be other events leading up to the marathon date which will be discussed at the next VH committee meeting in the 28th January.

Electrical work on the village hall will also be completed at the beginning of February '26

- **Defibrillator** - Cllr K. Brazier

There have been no reported issues in relation to the two defibrillators located in Gestingthorpe. The amount of £375.22 held in National Westminster Bank, Sudbury in respect of the defibrillator on Church Green has been approved for withdrawal and will be transferring to the Parish Council's funds. The rota covering the six-months from January 2026 to June 2026 has been circulated to those responsible for carrying out the regular checks. Community Heartbeat has had a new restructure.

We are continuing to try and make contact with Community Heartbeat to check who is on the VETS list along with a couple of other questions we have about the way the VETS system works.

We have received a response from Community Heartbeat, who recently underwent a complete organisational

restructure, including staff departures, which resulted in a delay in their response. Community Heartbeat is no longer establishing new VETs schemes, as recent technological changes have created operational challenges. However, amendments to our existing arrangements remain possible, and Community Heartbeat will provide us with the most up-to-date list of volunteers who are already registered. We will explore alternative methods of facilitating a VETs group and will contact other areas to identify and review their respective

- **Pavilion** – Cllr D. Green

The lights in the showers and the away changing room have now been fixed.

The cricket team are planning for next year's season and I haven't heard anything to the contrary that they won't be playing this year.

The team need invoicing for the use last season which I will send you the details of their home matches.

There is a water leak but cannot be found the exact place.

010/2026 EALC Training for Councillors

Monday – Thursday Day or Evening

- **Up to 7 Councillors: £588: 8–14 Councillors: £84 per Councillor: 15–21 Councillors: POA**

All Councillors to contact the Clerk on what training courses they require

011/2026 To bring the Defibrillator into the ownership of the Parish Council – update Cllr P. Bagby
Cllr P. Bagby handed the Clerk a cheque for £375.22p which is the total amount of money from the defibrillator fund. This money to be placed into the EMR account and kept separately. Once the cheque has cleared then the NatWest bank account will be closed

012/2026 Litter picking dates for 2026 to be decided. A Spring (early April beginning May) and October litter picking dates TBC

013/2026 Fencing and new trees on Playing field – Cllrs P. Bagby & G. Carey

As discussed earlier

014/2026 Finance

- To receive the Bank reconciliations as at 31st. December 2025

Councillors noted the Bank reconciliations as at 31st. December 2025

- To receive the comparison of Actual to Budget for 2025/2026

Councillors noted the comparison of Actual to Budget for 2025/2026

- To approve the payment of Accounts for December 2025 and January 2026 and to agree a transfer of funds to meet the Parish Councils financial requirements **All Agreed**

015/2026 2026-2027 budget - Councillors to finalise 2026-2027 budget

Cllr K. Brazier proposed an expenditure of £13434 For 2026-2027 resulting in a BDC Precept demand of £11734. Using the BDC Tax Base figure of 178.42 resulted in a Band D property figure of £65.77p pa. An Increase of £1.94p or 3.03%. Cllr D. Green seconded. **All Agreed.** The Chair and Clerk then signed the BDC Precept form

016/2026 Items for Next Agenda

Revisit mobile telephone mast: Stour Power grant for solar panels: Gestup Fest: Oates Cottages:

017/2026 2026 meeting dates: 20.05 AGM: 15.07: 16.09: 18.11.26

018/2026 Date of next meeting is on Wednesday 18th. March 2026 at 7pm

019/2026 Closure of the Meeting

To close the Meeting having considered and determined all items of business.

The Chair then closed the meeting at 9pm and thanked everyone for attending

Signed

P. Bagby

P. Bagby - Chair

18th. March 2026